

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the reasons that follow.

No claims have been added, canceled or amended.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claims 1-14 and 17-39 remain pending in this application.

Clarification of Claims:

The Office Action correctly recognizes that originally filed claims 1-10 were amended (and not canceled) in a reply filed on July 8, 2003. Applicant regrets the incorrect information provided in the Remarks section of the previously-filed Reply in this regard.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicant appreciates the indication in the Office Action that claims 1-14 are allowed, as well as the indication that claims 25-28 and 39 contain allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections:

In the Office Action, claims 17-19, 21-24, 29-32 and 34-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,466,549 to Hattig in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,667,992 to Yanagawa; and claims 20 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hattig in view of Yanagawa and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,445,711 to Scheel. These rejections are traversed for at least the reasons given below.

In its rejection of independent claim 17 and independent claim 30, the Office Action correctly recognizes that Hattig fails to teach an information discarding means for, when at least one of the remote buses is disconnected

from the network, discarding device information of devices connected to the remote bus. The Office Action incorrectly asserts that column 19, lines 3-25 of Yanagawa discloses this feature that is missing in Hattig.

Column 19, lines 3-25 of Yanagawa describes that, when an existing device is disconnected from a transmission line 1, the corresponding function list of that existing device is deleted from a function list database. Claims 17 and 30, on the other hand, recite that when a remote bus is disconnected from a network, information corresponding to all devices connected to the disconnected remote bus is discarded. Thus, it is the disconnection of a remote bus that prompts the discarding of device information of devices connected to that remote bus, whereby this is distinguished from the disconnection of a device itself (and thereby the discarding of information regarding that disconnected device).

Accordingly, independent claim 17 and independent claim 30 are patentable over the combined teachings of Hattig and Yanagawa. Dependent claims 18-24 are patentable due to their respective dependencies on base claim 17, and dependent claims 31-38 are patentable due to their respective dependencies on base claim 30 (and since Scheel et al. does not rectify the above-mentioned shortcomings of Hattig and Yanagawa).

Similarly, independent claim 29 recites an information discarding means for, when at least one of the remote buses is disconnected from the network, discarding device information of devices connected to the disconnected remote bus. Like the discussion given above with respect to independent claim 17, column 19, lines 3-25 of Yanagawa does not teach or suggest these features, and thus independent claim 29 is patentable over the combined teachings of Hattig and Yanagawa.

Conclusion:

Accordingly, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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